

Message Text

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SUBJECT: INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST - INDIAN OPINION

SUMMARY: IN MAJOR TV INTERVIEW INDIAN SCIENTIST ASSERTS INDIA SHOULD CONTINUE ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAM IRRESPECTIVE OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS AND BECOME TECHNOLOGICALLY SELF-RELIANT. EDUCATOR/POLITICIAN STATES TEST REPRESENTS NO CHANGE OF POLICY, CHINA ONLY ONE FACTOR IN DECISION TO TEST, AND INDIA'S DEMONSTRATED CAPACITY MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR FUTURE DECISIONS ON MAJOR WORLD ISSUES TO TAKE PLACE WITHOUT INDIA BEING CONSULTED. EXCERPTS FOLLOW. END SUMMARY.

1. IN ITS FIRST MAJOR INTERVIEW PROGRAM WITH ARTICULATE SPOKESMEN NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST, AIR-TV IN DELHI INTERVIEWED A SCIENTIST, A PLANNER AND AN EDUCATOR/POLITICIAN ON MAY 20 LATE EVENING PROGRAM ENTITLED: "NUCLEAR EXPLOSION: DIMENSIONS." AN EDITOR OF INDIAN EXPRESS QUESTIONED PROFESSOR K.L. CHOPRA, A PHYSICIST AND DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF SCIENCES, INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOG, DELHI (CHOPRA HAS SCIENTIFIC EXPERIENCE IN BOTH CANADA AND THE US), MR. M.C. BASU FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION, AND DR. V.P. DUTT, A POLITICAL SCIENTIST AND CHINA SPECIALIST WHO IS BOTH PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR AT DELHI UNIVERSITY AND ONE OF THE 12 MEMBERS OF THE UPPER HOUSE (RAJYA SABHA) NOMINATED BY THE PRESIDENT. DUTT IS FREQUENTLY INTERVIEWED ON AIR-TV, AND IS A MEMBER OF THE USEF/I BOARD.

2. CHOPRA FIRST GAVE A SIMPLE, CLEAR, CLASSROOM EXPLANATION OF UNCLASSIFIED

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IMPLOSION TECHNIQUE, WHY DONE UNDERGROUND, WHAT MATERIALS ARE

USED FOR ATOMIC EXPERIMENTS. BASU PROJECTED POSSIBLE USES OF PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS AND OTHER USES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY, MADE LEAST CONTRIBUTION TO TALK.

3. ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE "POLITICAL ASPECT" DR. DUTT SAID THAT SO FAR THERE WAS NO REAL DEPARTURE FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S DECLARED POLITIES. "THE WHOLE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD HAS BEEN SUCH AS TO KEEP ALL OPTIONS OPEN. THAT WAS SO IN THE TIMES OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU; THAT HAS BEEN SO IN LATER DAYS TOO."

4. ASKED WHETHER INDIA'S DECISION TO PROCEED WITH THIS PROJECT WAS "DICTATED" BY WHAT CHINA HAD BEEN DOING, DUTT SAID: "CHINA IS ONLY ONE FACTOR. CERTAINLY WHEN A LARGE AND SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT NEIGHBOR LIKE CHINA DEVELOPS OR ACQUIRES HIGH DESTRUCTIVE CAPABILITY, NATURALLY IT IS A MATTER OF CONCERN. I THINK THAT IT IS ONLY ONE FACTOR. I WOULD SAY FIRSTLY THAT THE DECISION IS AN ASSERTION OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY IN A VERY DRAMATIC AND GRAPHIC MANNER. THE QUESTION ALSO CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM THE ATTITUDE OF WORLD POWERS."

5. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON TIMING AND WORLD REACTION DUTT SAID: "THE WORLD POWERS HAVE BEEN SAYING THAT YOUR INFLUENCE AND STATUS IN THE WORLD DOES NOT DEPEND ON YOUR NUCLEAR CAPACITY AND YOUR NUCLEAR CAPABILITY. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, IN ACTUAL FACT, THEY HAVE NOT BEEN WILLING TO ACCEPT ANYONE WHO DOES NOT HAVE OR WHO HAS NOT DEMONSTRATED THE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY. THEREFORE, NOW IF THE WORLD POWERS HAD SAID FIVE YEARS AGO OR FOUR YEARS AGO, 'ALL RIGHT, WE DO NOT WANT OTHER COUNTRIES TO GO IN FOR NUCLEAR TESTING, THEREFORE IN FUTURE IN THE WORLD COUNCILS WE ARE INVITING JAPAN, INDIA, AUSTRALIA, CANADA AND SOME LARGE COUNTRIES IN AFRICA, COUNTRIES WHICH ARE VERY LARGE, WHICH HAVE THE SIZE, THE POTENTIAL, THE CAPACITY AND SO ON AND SO FORTH, HENCEFORTH WE ARE INVITING THEM INTO OUR COUNCILS SO THAT WE SIT TOGETHER AND TAKE DECISIONS, ' THEN PERHAPS THE DECISION OF INDIA MIGHT HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT, OR IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN PROLONGED. BUT IN THE GIVEN SITUATION THAT WE HAVE FACED,...THESE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS ON OUR BORDERS, A SITUATION IN WHICH THE WORLD TREATS YOU AS A SECOND-RATE POWER UNLESS YOU HAVE REALLY DEMONSTRATED YOUR CAPACITY....YOU CANNOT DEPEND ON OTHER COUNTRIES FOR YOUR NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS. YOU HAVE TO BE INDEPENDENT IN THIS

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FIELD....THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT THE WIDE RANGING POLITICAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED. I THINK IN FUTURE IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT, AND IT WILL BE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR THE BIG POWERS TO TAKE LARGE DECISIONS IN THESE FIELDS WITHOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF INDIA, WITHOUT CONSULTING INDIA. ALSO I THINK THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THERE IS A CERTAIN CHANGE IN THE BALANCE OF FORCES IN THE WORLD."

6. WHILE AGREEING THAT THE TEST HAD AFFECTED INDIA'S IMAGE, DR. CHOPRA QUESTIONED WHETHER "ONE NUCLEAR EXPLOSION WILL INVITE US TO THE MAJOR CORRIDORS OF INTERNATIONAL DECISIONS." NOTING THAT IT WAS A "GREAT ACHIEVEMENT" AND INDIA SHOULD ACCEPT THE "IMPORTANT FACT THAT WE CAN DO IT," CHOPRA ADDED: "WE SHOULD GO ON TO MAJOR FUTURE ADVENTURES. THIS IS PROBABLY SOMETHING THAT WE SHOULD BE KEEPING IN MIND, AND WE SHOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT THE POLITICAL, THE INTERNATIONAL RAMIFICATIONS." AS FOR OTHER BENEFITS, HE SAID, "THIS IS A BLESSING IN DISGUISE. TECHNOLOGICALLY I THINK THAT WE WILL HAVE TO BE MUCH MORE SELF-RELIANT, AS WE HAVE SHOWN IN THE LAST THREE YEARS. AND THIS WILL BE GOOD FOR US...IT IS HIGH TIME WE LEARNED THAT WE HAVE TO STAND ON OUR OWN FEET...WE HAVE TO MAKE OUR OWN DECISIONS..."

7. DR. DUTT RESPONDED THAT FOREIGN PRESS AND GOVERNMENTAL REACTION DEMONSTRATED THAT "THEY REALIZE THAT A CERTAIN FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE HAS OCCURRED. IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF THEIR INVITING US ...I AM NOT SAYING THAT ONE BANG NOW PUTS US THERE IN THE BIG-POWER CLUB. WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT...THE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR ENERGY IN INDIA FOR PURPOSES OF PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT UNLEASHES A CERTAIN PROCESS. AND THAT PROCESS IS THAT IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE WITHIN A FEW YEARS, FOR ANY MAJOR DECISION AFFECTING DISARMAMENT, AFFECTING WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT, AFFECTING RESTRUCTURING OF THE ENTIRE WORLD TO TAKE PLACE WITHOUT ANY CONSULTATION WITH INDIA."

8. ASKED WHETHER THIS WOULD "ENCOURAGE OTHER SECOND-GRADE ECONOMIC POWERS TO GO NUCLEAR," DUTT SAID: "I DO FEEL THAT WHICHEVER COUNTRY THINKS FINALLY IN ITS FUNDAMENTAL INTEREST THAT IT MUST EXPLODE THE ATOM FOR WHATEVER PURPOSE IT WANTS, WHETHER FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES, THEN IT IS GOING TO DO SO REGARDLESS OF WHETHER INDIA DOES OR DOESN'T...WE ALL KNOW

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THAT NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY IS THE TECHNOLOGY OF THE FUTURE. WE KNOW THAT OUR COUNTRY, WHICH IS SHORT OF FUEL, MAY HAVE TO RELY ON NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT...NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS BECOME NECESSARY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY." BIG POWER "LOAN" OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS, DUTT CONCLUDED, WOULD BE "AT THEIR SWEET WILL... IT HAS NOT BEEN MADE OBLIGATORY ON THEIR PART TO PROVIDE THIS RESEARCH, TO PROVIDE THESE FACILITIES TO A NON-NUCLEAR NATION WHICH NEEDS IT." PROGRAM ENDED AT THIS POINT.GILMORE

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